

ECEAP Edition

Volume 1, Issue 9 – October 2000

"A monthly update for family and friends of preschoolers in Washington State"



Former ECEAP Child Teaches Us

by Barbara Brauer, former Kennewick School District ECEAP Director

Many years ago, JJ was a four-year-old in ECEAP at one of our rural sites. He loved his days at preschool and his visits once a week by an ECEAP Family Educator. He made new friends and his mother and baby brother were frequent visitors to his preschool class. JJ is now 13 years old, his brother Tyler is 9, and they have accomplished a great deal in a short matter of time.

A year and a half ago, JJ was diagnosed with a malignant tumor behind one of his eyes. He has had successful surgery and treatment and is an active, happy, and healthy teenager. His ordeal and his family's manner of coping with it have benefited our community. Yes, JJ learned a lot during his ECEAP year, but now we are learning from him.

This past spring, Tyler decided to help other people like his brother who are suddenly faced with unexpected and serious health issues. He developed a cookie-making business and packaged all the ingredients necessary for making homemade cookies. He presented his product in a quart-sized mason jar with the instructions attached to the outside of the jar. He sold these in his community and raised over \$700 that he personally donated to families with unexpected medical needs. Tyler, a young entrepreneur, made the local newspaper and the Make-A-Wish Foundation took notice. They were touched by a brother's love and desire to work hard to ease the difficult burdens of others.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation contacted JJ and informed him he had been selected to have his wish granted. JJ thought for only a very short time and declared that his wish was to help a local man with Multiple Sclerosis manage the expenses that he and his family faced as he experienced a stem cell replacement. Not only was a trip to the Midwest a financial

challenge, the family's home was in the path of the Hanford fire late this past June. Fortunately, their home was spared but others around it burned to the ground. Smoke and environmental damage was extreme and a great deal of work has had to be done to clean up after the fire.

This story has a happy ending. The Foundation's representatives were taken by surprise by JJ's wish and said they didn't think a wish like JJ's could be granted. It was exceptional; nobody had ever wished for something for someone else. The wish was supposed to be "for the child". JJ's attitude was "It's my wish and I want money to go to Mr. Rose's family so they can be with him during his surgery and recovery." The

request was taken to the Make-A-Wish Board of Directors and it was unanimously agreed that JJ's wish would be granted. He is turning over \$4,300 to the Rose family.

Mr. Rose's procedure was successful and the family is home. JJ and Tyler have started another year of school and are busy doing what boys in a rural community do. We are lucky we share this community with JJ and Tyler; they are truly exceptional young boys. We are proud of them and happy to have been a part of their lives nine years ago.

Barbara Brauer recently retired from Kennewick School District after 21 years of service to her community, 13 of which as Kennewick's ECEAP director. We are grateful for her dedicated service to the children and families of Benton County and all of Washington State.

If you have stories you would like to share with the ECEAP community, please send them to ECEAP_Admin@cted.wa.gov or contact Michael Zimmerman at 360-725-2830. The ECEAP Edition is always looking for more articles, ideas, photos, news announcements, etc. ♦

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childhood education and family services."*

Israeli Bedouin Visits St. James

Photo and Story by Rick Nelson, *The Wahkiakum County Eagle*, Cathlamet, WA

St. James Family Center in September hosted the visit of a Bedouin from Israel who is trying to improve the conditions of his people. Sultan Abu-Obaid, director of Early Education of the Negev Education Association, said his visit had two purposes: 1) to learn methods of offering good educational programs for preschool age children, and 2) to inform people about the plight of Bedouins in Israel.



St. James Preschool Coordinator Mary Ann Nelson, left, described the operations of preschool classes to Sultan Abu-Obaid of Lakia, Israel. Abu-Obaid has been visiting rural preschools in Washington to gain ideas for operating preschools for Bedouin children in the Negev Desert.

Abu-Obaid explained that Bedouins are counted among the Arab minority in Israel and don't receive many services which Jewish Israelis receive. He and others in his organization feel education is a key to helping the Bedouins be part of the modern state of Israel.

"We want to raise the standard of education," he said. He added that only a small percentage of Bedouin children ever earn the equivalent of a

high school diploma. "Many drop out, especially women," he said. "So we need a lot of improvement to meet the standard of modern life. We still feel that the future will be good. We need peace in the Middle East and equality in Israel."

Bedouins who have lived in the Lakia area since the 1940's have banded together to support their children's education. Preschool is given first priority so the children have a head start before entering the Israeli system. For university students, scholarships are available for advanced training in math and science and Bedouin outreach.

The group has also formed a weaving project for women; they develop marketable skills while generating income for their families through the weaving and sale of carpets. Abu-Obaid's trip was coordinated through Seattle Episcopal churches, which have been supporting the Bedouin educational project. He visited preschools in the Seattle area and rural schools such as St. James in Cathlamet and Heritage College near Toppenish. ♦

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT OPPORTUNITY

The Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council has vacancies for parent representatives! This is your chance to participate in a statewide advisory group on early intervention services for children with special needs. For more information, contact Karen Walker at 360-902-8459/ TDD or 360-902-7864. You can also learn more about early intervention services on the Internet at <http://www.wa.gov/dshs/iteip/iteip.html>.

Head Start Loses Strong Leader

by Michael Zimmerman, *Children's Services*

Helen H. Taylor, Associate Commissioner of the federal Head Start Bureau of the Department of Health and Human Service's Administration for Children and Families, passed away on October 3 after a long battle with cancer. She had directed Head Start since 1994 and was a tireless advocate for children through her entire career. You can read about her accomplishments in expanding Early Head Start and creating performance standards, encouraging parent and community involvement, incorporating computer literacy into the classroom, and more on the Washington Post website at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/metro/obituaries/A22093-2000Oct6.html>.

In lieu of flowers, the family is asking that donations be made to a scholarship fund established in Helen's honor by the National Head Start Association (NHSA). A scholarship will be awarded at each NHSA Annual Training Conference beginning in 2001 to a Head Start Director to pursue a masters or doctoral degree. You may send contributions to:

The Helen H. Taylor Memorial Scholarship
National Head Start Association
Department 899
Alexandria, VA 22334-0899

The nation's early childhood community shares in the sorrow of Head Start's loss. ♦

A Piece of the Puzzle

DECA Social-Emotional Development Program for Young Children

by Ed Yonamine, Children's Services

Our work in early childhood education has always considered the social and emotional growth of young children a primary aim. We believe children should feel good about themselves, they are capable of doing many things, and people who are part of their lives should care for and love them. From these values, we attempt to create a foundation for children to begin understanding how to relate to, and act in, their world.

We know young children learn best when they are in safe and healthy environments, able to construct their knowledge through play, and feel good about themselves. In ECEAP, we developed standards that promote developmentally appropriate practices, relevant curricula, safe and healthy learning environments, and positive interactions. We identified professional practices to include observing, recording, and tracking of children's developmental progress and growth. Therefore, the need for documentation and use of assessment and/or screening tools becomes necessary.

Assessment tools for young children used in ECEAP, such as High Scope's Child Development Record or Oregon Assessment, have provided early childhood programs data to meet recordkeeping, assessment/screening, curriculum development standards, etc. However, what has been lacking, and is of concern to early childhood professionals, is an intentional way to plan, organize and implement experiences, or learning strategies, that supports young children's social and emotional growth.

The Devereux Foundation has developed a high quality, research-based program that supports early childhood professionals and parents in promoting children's social and emotional health. The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) Program is a strength-based system designed to promote resilience in children ages 2-5. Through the program, early childhood professionals and families learn specific strategies to support social and emotional development of young children, and to enhance the overall quality of early childhood programming. Strategies align to the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Accreditation Guidelines and the Head Start Performance Standards.

The cornerstone of the DECA Program is the DECA Tool. It is a standardized, norm-referenced behavior rating scale that focuses on the relationship between significant adult(s) and a child (attachment), a child's ability to experience a range of feelings and express them through appropriate words and actions

(self-control), and a child's ability to independently meet his or her needs (initiative). The focus of the tool is to measure protective factors in preschool children, but it also screens for behavioral concerns.

Both parent(s) and professionals complete the DECA tool in approximately ten minutes per child. Results generate individual and classroom profiles, and serve as a planning tool to identify classroom and instructional strategies that encourages strengths and support children's social and emotional development. Strategies implement developmentally appropriate practices highlighting the environment, daily programming, activities and experiences, supportive interactions, and partnerships with families. Many strategies do not differ from current practices in developmentally appropriate programs; rather, the tool frames how those practices foster attachment, self-control, and initiative for a child or the group that, in turn, fosters childhood resilience.

Another strategy integrated into the DECA Program is working with families. The primary focus is to promote a collaborative and supportive partnership between early childhood professionals and families. A guide (*For Now and Forever*) with simple, clear strategies is part of the support to families in parent education and home-school connection activities.

Because a quality early childhood program is an important protective factor for young children and their families, we are examining the DECA Program. We think the DECA Program and tool can demonstrate the social-emotional growth of children in ECEAP, especially to affirm that classroom and instructional strategies used daily by our teachers are on the mark!

Another potential benefit of DECA to ECEAP may be a strengthening of the referral process to a mental health professional, especially with family input. Also, learning about protective factors and resilience through workshops, one-on-one dialogue, etc., can broaden our definition for parent education, and strengthen our family support practices.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Ed Yonamine, Early Childhood Specialist, at 360-725-2843 or e-mail at edy@cted.wa.gov. Additional information on the Devereux Foundation and DECA is at <http://www.devereux.org>. ♦



E-Mail Demystified, Episode Four

by Michael Zimmerman, Children's Services

We've covered a lot of (hopefully) practical ground in the first three installments of this series. If you still haven't read about plain text vs. HTML-formatted messages, the difference between a mailing list and a listserv, or how to handle troublesome e-mail attachments, check out the July, August, and September issues of the ECEAP Edition, available on the ECEAP website at <http://www.oed.wa.gov/info/csd/waeceap/index.html>. This month we're batting cleanup, covering a few remaining tips on keywords and inbox rules that will help you send and receive e-mail like a pro.

LOL! BTW, IMHO... TTFN, CYL, F2F?

No, your computer didn't hiccup when trying to read the sentence above. Those are chat room acronyms, a useful way to save time typing, but mainly useful for confusing your readers. To translate all those acronyms, let's assume I'm replying to a funny message from a friend: "Laughing out loud! By the way, in my humble opinion... Ta ta for now, see ya later, face to face?" You may encounter some of these acronyms in your e-mail, but they are primarily intended for online chats. Be careful using them yourself, unless you know for sure the reader will understand. For a nice clean list of common acronyms, check out <http://www.rollanet.org/chat/acronyms.html>.

A few basic acronyms and other keywords can be used in e-mail subject lines to give your message recipients a way to quickly identify and prioritize the contents of their inboxes. Most people are familiar with FYI (For Your Information);

fewer know NIM. NIM stands for No Internal Message, and it's used to indicate everything the reader needs to know is contained directly in the subject line. If you can get all your information across in just a few words, like "It's a Girl!! - NIM", using NIM saves people the time and mouse clicks it takes to actually open your message.

Other keywords like URGENT, ACTION, etc. can act as visual flags that make your message stand out from the rest (using all capital letters helps distinguish keywords from actual text). Used carefully, most e-mail software supports automated rules and filters that can be set up to move messages from your inbox to specific folders, flag them as high priority, and even send an automatic reply to all incoming messages, except those from listservs (which otherwise creates an infinite loop), all based upon keywords. Check with your local computer geek, I mean Information Technology professional, for help with rules. Be careful not to abuse this idea just to get your messages read first, regardless of actual content; it's easy to set those same rules to automatically delete all messages from certain senders, and you don't want to end up on their list!

Now go out there and TYPE!

E-mail has the ability to increase the efficiency of our communications. (Notice I didn't say "save time"!) The goal of high quality business e-mail is to be brief and information-packed, benefiting both the sender and the recipient. Put as much information into the subject line and first paragraph of your messages as possible. Let people know at a glance what they can expect so they can prioritize when and how to respond. Keep it simple and if you want your message to be confidential, call or drop by, F2F. TTFN! ♦

WASHINGTON PROMISE SCHOLARSHIPS

Do you know a family with a teenager about to graduate by June who may be considered to be in the top 15% of his or her graduating class (determined by the end of the fall term), and that the family is not over 135% of the state's median income for the year? If the teenager will be attending a public university, community or technical college, independent four-year college, or private vocational school in the state of Washington at least half-time, they may be eligible for a two year scholarship from the state worth approximately \$1,500 a year! Governor Locke recently noted nearly 5,700 Washington students have received Promise Scholarships since the program was established in 1999. For more information on Washington Promise scholarships, go to <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/paying/Promise/psindex.htm>. ♦



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